



Pat Quinn, Governor
Robert F. Flider, Director

Office of the Director

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Dear Friend:

Agriculture has changed dramatically. For example, sixty years ago, corn yields averaged 54 bushels an acre, significantly less than the 160 bushels an acre that Illinois farmers typically harvest these days. Soybean yields were 21 bushels an acre, less than half the current average of 46 bushels.

These gains can be attributed to increased knowledge and innovation. Sophisticated new farm machinery, advanced seed genetics and improved production methods have enabled Illinois farmers to grow more food on fewer acres than ever before.

Because the agriculture industry is a major contributor to Illinois' economy, having statistical data available to assist farmers in making strategic operational decisions is critical. The *Illinois Annual Bulletin* of agricultural statistics is a modern successor to statistical compilations that have been done by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) since 1866. Today, statistics for Illinois are compiled by the Illinois Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, which represents the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the USDA through a cooperative agreement enacted in August 1925.



This *Annual Bulletin* contains user-friendly information encompassing agricultural exports, alternative crops, farmland conversion, fertilizer and chemical utilization, and weather patterns in addition to numerous economic components including farm income, asset and debt levels, farm real estate values and wages for farm labor. Farmers will find easy-to-read tables and comparisons on how Illinois production compares to that of other states, as well as within their own county, or how it compares to that of other farmers.

Illinois is an agribusiness leader; we continually discover new ideas and seize opportunities to build on existing products and technologies. I am pleased to present this publication with the cooperation of the USDA. I hope you find this to be a useful tool as we all work to move Illinois forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Robert F. Flider'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert F. Flider
Director, Illinois Department of Agriculture